



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF



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24 MARCH 1966

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1. South Vietnam

There was further antigovernment agitation today in the Hué - Da Nang area, but it was less frenetic than yesterday's. In Hué, "struggle groups," apparently still enjoying free access to the local radio, broadcast bitter attacks on the Saigon government and threatened to topple it unless they get their way.

Premier Ky has sent another emissary to Hué to "persuade" the reluctant General Thi to leave his old corps area. The emissary will offer Thi "anything he wants"--including command of another corps area--if only he will leave. Thi seems disposed to sit tight in hopes that events will turn in his favor.

Saigon remains calm, despite stories of attempts to stir up a general strike. There are also reports that the Buddhists are working hard on the students, other religious groups, and even the montagnards. The Buddhists want more open support for their present course of action. So far, a number of students and the Catholics have declined to become involved.

2. North Vietnam

Le Duan, powerful first secretary of the North Vietnamese Communist Party, is in Peking for a short visit. There are rumors in both Peking and Moscow that he will head Hanoi's delegation to the Soviet party congress. There is as yet no confirmation.

From Hanoi's point of view he would be an apt choice. By sending a delegation at all, Hanoi would be living up to the commitment given Shelepin in January. By choosing Le Duan, a stiff, pro-Peking man, Hanoi would be trying to reassure the Chinese that their interests would not be overlooked.

So far, only the slavish Albanian and New Zealand parties have followed Peking in refusing to attend.

3. NATO

Paris is miffed over the absence of "relevant replies" to its notes on the alliance's future and appears to be trying to press the 14 into taking the initiative in bilateral talks.

The French representative to NATO, who spent an hour with De Gaulle on Tuesday, has told a US official that a further communication setting deadlines for specific action is already drafted. He was evasive on the dates for eviction of integrated commands and US installations, but said action to remove French personnel and end the commitment of French forces would occur between July and September.

We doubt press suggestions that Salazar may be considering withdrawing Portugal from NATO or making the US leave its Azores bases. The bases are his trump card, and he is unlikely to play it until he needs our help worse than now.

We have received no official comment on the President's speech of yesterday. The West German press welcomed the reaffirmation of the American commitment to European defense and viewed the avoidance of harsh words as a willingness to be patient with De Gaulle.

The French press was divided into predictable pro- and anti-Gaullist stands, although all seemed to believe a compromise was now out of the question. TASS carried only selected quotes without comment.

4. Indonesia

Military and civilian leaders are still trying to organize a new government--and Sukarno is still grasping for ways to influence its coloration and to keep up the appearance of being Indonesia's supreme authority. An army spokesman said today "we are not isolating the president. We just want him to think about things in quiet and solitude." To create the proper atmosphere for meditation, the army has limited him to one telephone and is deciding who can see him.

5. Communist China

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6. West Africa

Liberian President Tubman is trying to calm down the uproar stemming from the Ghana coup. He says that the feuding presidents of Guinea and Ivory Coast have agreed to meet next month with him and, hopefully, ace African mediator Haile Selassie.

In the present West African atmosphere a wild word or two from either Touré or Houphouet could scuttle this plan, but the mere fact they have told Tubman--who does have their confidence--that they will be there may lay to rest the current "war" scare.

Nkrumah, incidentally, is still in Conakry

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7. France

The French may have to postpone their Pacific nuclear tests, scheduled to begin in July. There have been rumors of this around Paris lately, and yesterday the foreign office confirmed that "some difficulties" had arisen, and Pompidou himself was chairing a meeting on the subject.

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8. Dominican Republic

Former rebel leader Caamano, in London, is still making noises about returning to the Dominican Republic soon. which bode no good for the fragile political peace. He might try to reassociate himself with the aura of the "constitutionalist" cause by showing up for the expected celebrations on 24 April--the first anniversary of the revolt. By then, Bosch will probably have made an announcement about his candidacy. Should he say he will not run, Caamano might then put his hat in the ring.

9. Colombia

With about 90 percent of the returns from Sunday's congressional election now in, the governing National Front appears to have just missed the two-thirds majority required for effective control of congress. Much tension and political maneuvering are likely between now and the 1 May presidential election, although the National Front's showing seems strong enough to deter the military from intervening.

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